



# NAVY HISTORY MATTERS

August 4, 2020



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Welcome to Navy History Matters—our weekly compilation of articles, commentaries, and blogs related to history and heritage. Every week we'll gather the top-interest items from a variety of media and social media sources and then link you to related content at NHHC's website ([history.navy.mil](https://history.navy.mil)), your authoritative source for Navy history.

## ★ Families of USS *Indianapolis* Crewmembers: We Are Their Legacy

The story of the service and ultimate sacrifice of the crew of [USS \*Indianapolis\*](#) is an important chapter in U.S. Navy history. Just days after delivering the components of the atomic bomb that was later dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, Japanese submarine *I-58* torpedoed *Indianapolis* in the dead of night on July 30, 1945. Within minutes, more than 880 of the ship's crew were plunged into the open waters of the Pacific Ocean. After four to five days of exposure to the elements, drownings, dehydration, hypothermia, and shark attacks, only 316 of the brave crew survived. After 75 years, remembering the resilience of the crew is still important. Peggy McCall Campo is the secretary of the USS *Indianapolis* Survivors Organization and the daughter of *Indianapolis* survivor Donald C. McCall. She graciously shared with NHHC the impact the ship's crew has made on her life, and the importance of the survivors organization in honoring them. For more on her thoughts, [read the blog at The Sextant](#). To learn how the current crew of USS *Indianapolis* honored their predecessors, read [USS \*Indianapolis\* pauses to honor crew of famed namesake ship](#).



**Photo Link:** <https://usnhistory.navylive.dodlive.mil/2020/07/30/families-of-uss-indianapolis-crewmembers-we-are-their-legacy/>

## ★ WWII@75: Hiroshima, Nagasaki Attacks

On Aug. 6, 1945, 75 years ago, the atomic bomb "[Little Boy](#)" was detonated over Hiroshima, Japan, by the bomber, [Enola Gay](#), piloted by U.S. Army Air Force Col. Paul Tibbets Jr. Navy Capt. [William S. Parsons](#), who later became the Navy's leading figure on nuclear issues and attained the rank of rear admiral, armed the bomb in flight. Three days later, on Aug. 9, the atomic bomb "[Fat Man](#)" was detonated over Nagasaki, Japan, by the bomber, Bock's Car, piloted by U.S. Army Air Force Maj. Charles Sweeney. Navy Cmdr. Frederick W. Ashworth armed the bomb in flight. The atomic attacks eventually led to [Japan's unconditional surrender](#) and the end of [World War II](#). For more, read [Hiroshima and Nagasaki, before and after the bombs](#) at History's website.



**Photo Link:** <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/art/artists/the-art-of-standish-backus/still-life-hiroshima.html>

## ★ H. L. Hunley Raised 20 Years Ago

On Aug. 8, 2000, at 8:37 a.m., the Confederate submarine *H. L. Hunley* broke the surface of the ocean for the first time in more than 136 years near the mouth of the harbor at Charleston, SC. Once safely secured for transporting, *H. L. Hunley* was shipped to the [Warren Lasch Conservation Center](#), now part of the Clemson University Restoration Institute, for conservation inside a [specialty designed tank](#). The Confederate submarine has the distinction of being the first submarine to sink an enemy warship in wartime. In the summer of 2000, a team of professionals from [NHHC](#), the [National Park Service](#), and the [South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology](#) made the decision to excavate the site due to concerns that the historic vessel could be disturbed or damaged since its location was known. For more, check out [Underwater Archaeology Branch's H. L. Hunley](#) page.



**Photo Link:** <https://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/NH-97000/NH-97356-12-KN.html>

## ★ Purple Heart Day

On Aug. 7, 1782, President George Washington ordered the establishment of the Badge of Military Merit, which was to be presented to Soldiers for “any singularly meritorious action.” Washington’s Badge of Military Merit was awarded to only three known Soldiers during the [American Revolution](#) and was mostly forgotten until Gen. [Douglas MacArthur](#) revived the award when he served as the Army’s chief of staff. On Feb. 22, 1932—Washington’s 200th birthday—the U.S. War Department announced the creation of the Purple Heart, a revival of Washington’s Badge of Military Merit. The Purple Heart is the oldest American military decoration for military merit and is awarded to members of the U.S. armed forces who have been killed or wounded in action against an enemy of the United States. For more, read [The Purple Heart](#) at [NHHC’s website](#).



**Photo Link:** <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhmc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhmc-series/nh-series/80-G-K-14000/80-G-K-14495.html>

## ★ Happy Birthday, U.S. Coast Guard

Today, the [U.S. Coast Guard](#) celebrates its 230th birthday. Established in 1790 by President George Washington to enforce tariffs, the U.S. Coast Guard has become a military force and federal law enforcement agency dedicated to the safety, security, and stewardship of the nation’s waters. The Coast Guard is the only military organization within the [Department of Homeland Security](#) and is considered the nation’s premier maritime law enforcement community that serves to save lives, protect the environment, and defend the homeland. Happy birthday, U.S. Coast Guard!



**Photo Link:** <https://media.defense.gov/2016/Oct/26/2001931379/-1/-1/0/161026-G-MI999-009.JPG>

## ★ Pat Donnelly, Legendary Football and Lacrosse Player at Navy, dies at age 77

Pat Donnelly, who ranks among superstar football players Joe Bellino and Roger Staubach as the U.S. Naval Academy’s finest athletes, died July 24 after a lengthy battle with Alzheimer’s disease. Donnelly’s prowess on both sides of the ball made him one of the greatest players in Navy football history. The Ohio native was such a great athlete he picked up lacrosse while at Navy and became an All-American in that sport as well. “Pat may have been the most tremendous natural athlete I’ve ever seen. He could have played any sport and been highly successful,” said Dennis Wedekind, starting goalie for the Navy lacrosse team, 1963–1965. Donnelly, an Ohio native, was his high school’s valedictorian and a three-sport standout. After graduating from the Naval Academy, Donnelly served two tours during the [Vietnam War](#). For more, [read the article](#) in the *Capital Gazette*.



**Photo Link:** <https://www.capitalgazette.com/sports/navy/ac-cs-navy-football-lacrosse-legend-pat-donnelly-dies-20200729-dbjrmshbsbclxlabrj2oaskbem-story.html>

## ★ Navy Department Library Formally Established

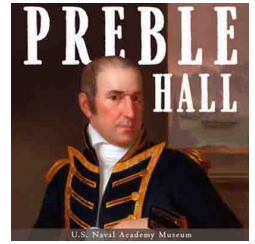
On Aug. 7, 1882, Public Act No. 21 officially established the Navy’s Library as a departmental institution; however, the library’s roots extend back to 1794 when the Naval Bureau was part of the War Department in Philadelphia. Although it was formally [established in 1882](#), a March 31, 1800, letter from President John Adams to [Benjamin Stoddert](#), the first [Secretary of the Navy](#), documents the establishment of the Navy Department Library. The library, which was attached to the office of the Secretary of the Navy and located near the White House, was in continuous existence until it was formally named the Navy Department Library in 1882. For more, read [History of the Navy Department Library](#) at [NHHC’s website](#).



**Photo Link:** <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhmc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhmc-series/nh-series/NH-02000/NH-2374.html>

## ★ Preble Hall Podcast

In a recent [naval history podcast](#) from Preble Hall, Jan Herman discusses his book, *The Lucky Few: The Fall of Saigon and the Rescue Mission of the USS Kirk*. The [Preble Hall podcast](#), conducted by personnel at the [U.S. Naval Academy Museum](#) in Annapolis, MD, interviews historians, practitioners, military personnel, and other experts on a variety of naval history topics from ancient history to more current events. Also loaded recently is [Anglo-American Naval Relations, 1918–1953](#). Corbin Williamson is an assistant professor of strategy at the Air War College. He holds a PhD in history from Ohio State University and specializes in the 20th century U.S. Navy. He has previously worked in the Office of the Secretary of Defense Historical Office and taught for the Naval War College. His first book, *The U.S. Navy and its Cold War Alliances, 1945–1953*, will be published by the University Press of Kansas in 2020.



**Photo Link:** <https://www.usna.edu/Museum/PrebleHall/>

## ★ Webpage of the Week

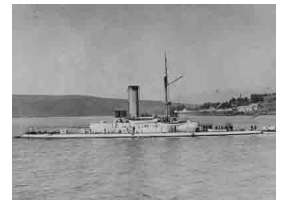
This week's Webpage of the Week is new to NHHC's [exploration and innovation](#) pages. The use of flying objects in the United States, or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), dates back to the [Civil War](#) when both Union and Confederate forces would launch balloons laden with explosives on ammunition depots in an attempt to explode them. In late 1916, the U.S. Navy hired the Sperry Gyroscope Company to develop an unmanned torpedo that could fly 1,000 yards with the capability of detonating its warhead on an enemy warship. Two years later, after a series of failures, on March 6, 1918, the company succeeded in launching an unmanned torpedo that hit the desired target 1,000 yards away. With that successful flight, the world's first unmanned aircraft system, the [Curtis N-9](#), was born. For more, check out the [Navy's use of unmanned aerial vehicles](#). The new page contains a short history, suggested reading, articles, blogs, and selected imagery.



**Photo Link:** <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhnc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhnc-series/nh-series/USN-1164000/usn-1164756-dc-130a-hercules.html>

## ★ Today in Naval History

On Aug. 4, 1898, during the [Spanish-American War](#), [USS Monterey](#) became the first monitor to cross the Pacific, reaching Manila Bay, Philippines, from San Francisco, CA. *Monterey* was ordered—in company with collier [Brutus](#)—to sail for the Philippines to provide the Asiatic Squadron with big gun support against a possible attack by the Spanish battleship *Paleyo*. The two ships made the 8,000-mile voyage without mishap. *Monterey* remained in the Philippines supporting the occupation of Luzon into the following year. On April 6, 1900, *Monterey* sailed for China, receiving new boilers at Hong Kong, and then operated from July 1900 to September 1901 as a station ship at Shanghai.



For more dates in naval history, including your selected span of dates, see [Year at a Glance](#) at [NHHC's website](#). Be sure to check this page regularly, as content is updated frequently.

**Photo Link:** <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhnc/research/publications/documentary-histories/united-states-navy-s/blockade-and-siege-o/illustrations/uss-monterey.html>